

Giardiasis & Swimming Pools

What? How? Where?

What? Giardiasis is a diarrheal illness caused by the germ *Giardia* found in the intestines of infected people and animals. *Giardia* has the ability to survive in the environment for weeks or months, and in properly maintained pools for almost an hour.

How? Giardiasis can be spread by swallowing recreational water or improperly treated drinking water contaminated by feces from an infected person or animal. *Giardia* can also be spread through direct contact with an infected person or with surfaces that have been contaminated.

Where? *Giardia* can be found in improperly treated swimming pools and naturally occurring water sources such as lakes, ponds, rivers, and streams. Other sources include contaminated drinking water and contaminated food.

Prevention

You can keep from getting and spreading *Giardia* by doing the following:

- Don't swim when you have diarrhea.
- Practice good pool hygiene by showering with soap and water before and after swimming.
- Wash your hands with warm soap and water after using the restroom.

- Don't swallow water from recreational swim facilities, and avoid getting it in your mouth.

For Parents of Young Kids:

- Take your kids on regular bathroom breaks. Don't wait until you hear "I have to go!"
- Change diapers in a bathroom, not at poolside.
- Wash your child thoroughly, especially their rear-end.

Symptoms

Symptoms of giardiasis usually occur between 1 to 3 weeks after exposure and can last up to 6 weeks. These symptoms include: diarrhea, gas or flatulence, abdominal pain or cramps, floating stools, nausea, and dehydration.

Should you experience any of the above symptoms, seek diagnosis and treatment from your healthcare provider.



Information from this fact sheet, as well as additional information is available from:
CDC: <http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/rwi/illnesses/giardia.html> &
http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/giardia/gen_info/faqs.html
WHO: http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/dwq/en/admicrob5.pdf



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